REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 10-17, 19, 20 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Young et al. in view of Giddings; Claims 8, 18 and 21-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Young et al. in view of Giddings and further in view of Christel et al. and Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 12-14, 17-19 and 21-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Christel et al. in view of Giddings. Claims 1-5, 8 and 10-24 remain active.

Considering first then the rejection of Claims 1-5, 10-17, 19, 20 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Young et al. in view of Giddings, it is to be noted that each of Claims 1 and 24 have been amended to indicate that, as shown in Figures 8(b)-8(d), such include a confluent portion and a branch portion and include an aqueous phase channel 1 and an organic phase channel 2 which, respectively, have at least one wall which are connected to an end portion of the continuous partition walls and wherein a plurality of adjacent partition walls are provided between said confluent portion and said branched portion.

While Giddings has been cited as teaching a fine channel device having continuous partition walls (e.g., an inlet splitter 15a and an outlet splitter 15d as shown in Figure 3 thereof), such splitters are not connected to walls of a confluent portion and a branch portion having an aqueous phase channel and an organic phase channel as presently claimed. Instead, the splitters are spaced from the adjacent walls 12, 13. Moreover, the splitters have no teaching or suggestion of a plurality of adjacent partition walls provided between the confluent portion and the branched portion, as presently claimed. It is further submitted that

neither Young et al. nor any of the remaining references of record rectify this deficiency of Giddings.

Considering next then the rejection of Claims 8, 18 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Young et al. in view of Giddings and further in view of Christel et al. and the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 12-14, 17-19 and 21-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Christel et al. in view of Giddings, it is submitted that Christel et al. fails to rectify the deficiencies noted hereinabove with regard to Giddings as well as Young et al. More particularly, while Christel et al. only teaches a plurality of microcolumns 111 cited as teaching partition walls, such microcolumns are not connected to a wall of an aqueous phase channel or an organic phase channel and instead are spaced from the walls of channels 102 and 101, as is clearly illustrated in Figure 5. Insofar as none of the remaining references of record teach or disclose Applicants' claimed limitations, it is submitted that each of independent Claims 1 and 24 clearly patentably define over such references. In view of the dependency of Claims 2-5, 8 and 10-23 upon Claim 1, it is submitted that such dependent claims also merit indication of allowability.

In view of the foregoing, an early and favorable Office Action is believed to be in order and the same is hereby respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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